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the field of biology for the solution of the problem of death, and thus to minister to the universal human need of light and consolation. The real thesis is very simple—namely, that from its first appearing till now death has been the servant and not the enemy of life. The earliest life left no dead remains behind it, but death entered at the same time with sex. The entrance of sex brought to life the promise of immeasurable variety and progress, and death, its companion, was the agent to clear the way for its beneficent work. In the course of evolution death has tended to the advancement of life, by making room for the development of higher forms. When life had become spiritual, in man, death was essential to its elevation into the higher realm that befits its nature; and thus death may be counted among the valid grounds for a presumption of immortality. The suffering that its presence involves is an element of positive beneficence in the administration of a living and spiritual world. A “final discharge of death” is to be expected in the course of ages, whenever “life can go on better without death,” and, as death entered with sex, so sex will be its companion in departing. The ambiguity of this last sentence mirrors the ambiguity of the book at this point. It is not made quite clear whether the “final discharge of death” means the transferring of all humanity to another life where death has no place, or whether the life that may exist at some given future time is to “go on” thenceforth as a final product, without further continuation of birth and dying. This lack of clearness weakens the statement at an interesting point. As for the substance of the thought, a brief statement seems to make it appear large enough, and yet in reading one experiences a certain sense of attenuation, finding the “body of doctrine” less massive than he hoped. But the practice of bringing spiritual consolation from the field of biology, though quite legitimate, is still so new as not to have lost the sense of strangeness, and this perhaps is why the sensation of insufficiency creeps in. The strongest chapter in the book is the one on “Presumptions of Immortality.”

WILLIAM N. CLARKE.

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THEORETICAL ETHICS. By MILTON VALENTINE, D.D., LL.D.  
Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1897. Pp. v + 232.  
Cloth, \$1.25, *net*.

THIS book enjoys the distinction of being, perhaps, the smallest of its class. But it has other excellencies besides that of brevity.

Obviously it is the ripe fruit of long and patient reflection and of deep experience. The standpoint is that of "intuitionist" ethics. Its author holds, with unwavering courage, to the competence of the human mind to know reality; to the moral nature of man as underived from other and earlier elements, and nowise to be resolved into them; to freedom; to the absolute validity of the moral law; to the supreme authority of conscience, as directly perceptive of the right; to the theistic implications and issues of morality; and to such other "old-fashioned" views as go along with these. But if the opinions are old, the temper is modern. The discussion is marked by an unusual precision and strength of statement, while sometimes rising into a strain of noble eloquence, as, *e. g.*, in the estimate given of the moral meaning of the world's history, and of the ethical illumination and dynamic afforded by Christianity. The work constitutes one of the most acute and effective vindications of intuitive and theistic ethics with which we are acquainted; if it has any lack, it is in an adequate appreciation of the elements of truth contained in other systems: We must wait still for the treatise on ethical theory that shall synthesize in one coherent and complete statement the divers truths which the intuitionist, the evolutionist, the eudæmonist and utilitarian have discerned and defended. And perhaps the time has not yet fully come, though it seems to be at hand, when such a work can be written.

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WM. F. BLACKMAN.

THE CHRISTIAN ECCLESIA. A Course of Lectures on the Early History and Early Conceptions of the Ecclesia; and Four Sermons. By FENTON JOHN ANTHONY HORT, D.D., Lady Margaret's Reader in Divinity in the University of Cambridge. London: Macmillan & Co., Limited; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1897. \$1.75.

THESE lectures were delivered at the University of Cambridge, England, in 1888 and 1889. Dr. Hort originally intended to examine the evidence on the subject of the ecclesia presented in the history of the early centuries of Christianity, but he failed to carry out his purpose. Still the treatise, as he left it, is quite complete. The effort of the editor of this volume to supply the deficiency by adding four of the author's sermons, preached on different occasions, is hardly a success. These discourses have but a very remote bearing upon the topic discussed in these scholarly lectures.